

000 File Summary

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Norman
Norman Rothman Inclusive dates - 1951-1975

Rothman is characterized on the 201 file review form as a "former willing collaborator (relationship terminated). The 201 file was reviewed in 1975.

An Oct 15, 1959 cable states that a "new anti-Castro organization with headquarters in Miami at the Biltmore Terrace Hotel, is managed by Rothman "who is supposed to provide source thru U.S. gangsters for guns and other weapons." An Oct 19, 1959 cable indicates that Rothman is under indictment in Pittsburgh for the Interstate Transportation of Stolen Arms. A Dec. 10, 1959 cable states that Rothman is "going to Yucatan, Mexico to seek a site for a base of operations against the Castro gov't." A Dec 31, 1959 cable reports that after Rothman returned from Mexico City he stated "We have a strip." A compatriot of Rothman, Eduardo Whitehouse, is later ~~was~~ said to remark that "We have the planes." The cable states "Believed that both subj. [~~the~~ Rothman] and Whitehouse are acquiring planes for purpose of setting up base of operations in Yucatan Peninsula for anti-Castro group headed by Col. Orlando Piedra and Roberto Fernandez Miranda."

A cable dated Feb 5, 1960 reports that Rothman has been released from the Allegheny County Jail after an appeal bond was posted. A June 23, 1960 cable reports that Rothman was convicted of interstate transportation of firearms stolen from the National Guard Armory in Canton, Ohio. He received a 5 year sentence and a \$10,000 fine.

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A Sept 27, 1960 cable to the Director from MASH (0828) stated: ~~the~~ "1. FBI has advised of approach made to Frank Fiorini for procurement of two MIG aircraft which would be brought to states by one Czech and one Cuban pilot. Approach made by Norman Rothman who is hood indicted for gun running and stolen bonds currently out on \$50,000 bond.

"2. FBI contact felt Rothman interest was straight profit motivated hope for favorable treatment re above rap. Contact stated no chance whatever latter and that had advised Fiorini that FBI could not handle such a deal but would pass to other interested U.S. gov't agency. Said that inspite of above derog info believed Rothman could very probably produce."

"3. Has Hqs. any interest pursue."

Headquarters responded on Sept 28, 1960 (Dir 02972) stating, "If Ref para 4 plan involves defection of MIG and ~~a~~ Czech pilot from Cuba Hqs. vitally interested. Advise all pertinent details."

JMASH responded on Oct 1, 1960 (MASH 0891):

"1. View Rothman forthcoming trial local FBI feels Justice Department be advised prior any CIA contact subj. This to prevent any complication prosecution if op succeeds and Rothman attempts. make deal re possible prison term.

2. Per telecon 29 Sept MASH advised Hqs Santiago Rey also approached by Rothman with same plan ref A [MISPLANE]. If Hqs decides go ahead with ops, MASH plan make contact through Rey."

This cable was followed by another ~~SECRET~~ cable to the Director from MASH, dated Oct 20, 1960 (MASH 1162) stating

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"Request replies to rets [reference are masht 0625; masht 0891], FBI still has open ~~case~~ case Ret A and has called several times. Also desire give positive answer to Santiago Rey on ref B." No responding cable from Hdq. is contained in this file.

The file contained two memoranda for the record prepared by [redacted] dated June 30, 1961 and July 10, 1961. The June 30 memo contains the following information:

a- Rothman's DOB is 26 Dec 1914; POB is Bronx, NY.
b- "When Rothman first came to CIA's attention in Sept. 1958, he was living in Dallas, Texas and was allegedly engaged in public relations work. According to his wife, Gloria, he made a one-week trip to Los Angeles in September on undisclosed business."

c- "In Oct 1959, Rothman was managing the Biltmore Terrace Hotel in Miami from which he was reported ^{by} the FBI to be supplying an anti-Castro organization with arms which he obtained through U.S. gangsters...."

d- Following Pittsburgh conviction, Rothman went to Chicago, where he surrendered on charges of playing a key role in one of the biggest robberies in modern criminal history, the \$13.5 million looting of a Canadian bank. "Robbery was touched off when the Canadian branch of the mafia received a hurry-up order from the Caribbean for arms. The Canadian mafia did not have the money to buy arms, but it knew how to get hands on the contents of the Brockville, Ontario bank. It called upon the U.S. mafia for assistance, and it was then that Rothman entered the picture, it was charged." Subsequently

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portions of loot turned up in Shanghai, Argentina, Cuba, and Australia."

e. "Before Rothman was tracked down in connection with the above crimes, he was reported by the FBI as traveling to Yucatan to seek a base of operations against the Castro gov't. In this enterprise he was associated with (Teddy) Whitehouse Insua, formerly of the Cuban Civil Aeronautical Association; ex-Colonel Orlando Piedra Negueruela, former member of BEAC and head of Cuban Bureau of Investigations, and Colonel Roberto Fernandez Miranda, brother-in-law of Batista and former commander of the presidential guards as well as president of the National Sports Commission. While no mention is made of Rolando Masterner in this connection, Rothman has engaged in many exploits and deals with Masterner."

f. "In Sept 1960 Rothman still out on \$50,000 bond, made an approach to Frank Fiorini, soldier of fortune, offering to obtain two migs - one flown by a Czech and another by a Cuban. Fiorini felt that Rothman's interest was stimulated by a straight profit motive or by hopes for favorable treatment regarding the Fed case against him."

g. "In Oct. 1960, Rothman again appeared in Dallas, where he approached Robert E. Grinnan, an oil contracts promotion man. Rothman claimed to have connections with Nor-Roth Industries of N.Y.C. and stated that clients of his had an interest in purchasing 1/2 million metric tons of diesel fuel oil and 1 million metric tons of crude oil to be delivered over a five-year period to Hamburg, Germany. Grinnan, puzzled by the offer,

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reported to the FBI. He went to N.Y. in November and met Rothman and the other principals of the deal, a Mary Talley and a Dr. Phillip Paneth de Panay. Largely because of Grinnan's suspicions the deal was never consummated."

b. "As of December 1960, Rothman was living in Dallas, Texas."

The second memorandum for the record (July 10, 1961) contains additional background information and an updated location on Rothman. The memo indicates ^{that} ~~Rothman~~ during the Batista regime, Rothman was the supervisor of slot machines in Camaguey province under the national supervisor, Alberto Araura Moya, who was one of ^{the} owners of the Tropicana nightclub in Havana. The memo states that recent reports place Rothman in Miami.

The file also contains a memorandum for the Deputy Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division from Clark W. Simmons re a meeting with Rothman and David M. McConnell. The memo is dated June 30, 1961. The meeting occurred on June 29, 1961, at the Deputy Attorney General's office and was for the purpose of evaluating "Rothman's claim to operational assets inside Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean area. An agreement was made that ^{McConnell} ~~Rothman~~ would be notified of Rothman's "operational potential in Cuban affairs" on July 5. (There is no record in the file of ~~the~~ any further communication with McConnell).

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At the beginning of the meeting, McConnell spoke to Simmons privately. McConnell described himself as a "leading political figure in the Democratic Party machine in N. Carolina," and stated he was acquainted with Robert Kennedy, General Taylor, and General Van Fleet. McConnell is a corporate tax attorney and was concerned about the embarrassment to the Kennedy administration caused by the Cuban "fiasco." He stated that Rothman claims to have assets and capabilities which would enable Rothman to destroy the arms dumps on the plantation of ex-president Cardenas of Mexico, to set up operational bases in the Yucatan at a cost of \$50-\$1,000, to sabotage targets in Cuba identified by the U.S. gov't, and to provide positive intelligence on the activities of Chinese Communist Groups in the Western Hemisphere.

When Rothman was ~~questioned~~ questioned by Simmons, he made the following points:

1- Castro had executed three of his close friends:
(Francisco - war name)
Rogelio Gonzalez, Sori Marin, and Efigenio Fernandez.

2- Rothman has the operational capability to destroy arms dumps of Cardenas. He has agent assets in Mexico with whom he made contact 4 to 5 months ago.

3- He had Indians construct an airstrip in the Yucatan. One B-26 had landed there.

4- He is well acquainted with Sanchez Arango and considers him a close personal friend. He last met Arango 6 weeks ago.

5- He has the personnel and capabilities to attack or sabotage any target of our choosing in Cuba. He has a

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basic plan for assassination of Castro. The plan called for an air attack with napalm against Castro when he was addressing a rally. He has 100 pilots who had participated in the invasion of Cuba and are now working for the Congolese Air Force. Rothman would not identify the pilots.

6- Rothman said he had many agents going in and out of Cuba. He is in contact with 6 agents at this time. The agents are in the tourist-travel business or import-export business and enter the U.S. through 3rd countries.

7- He knows of many Chinese communists going into Canada from Cuba.

8- Rothman expressed resentment over gun-running charges. He said "that CIA used the same people in these gun running activities and the same houses, for which he (Mr. Rothman) was being prosecuted by the Federal Government. He said that he had supervised 40 ship operations on behalf of the Frente against Cuba. He said that CIA would truck the stuff to the point of ship pick-up, where he (Mr. Rothman) would supervise the loading of the ships. He said that he had purchased the 20th ship "reefer" which was the first boat to support the underground in Cuba. He added that he knew everything the CIA planned in maritime operations and for the invasion."

9- Rothman stated he is a close friend of John Abbes Garcia, Chief of Dominican Republic Security.

At the conclusion of the memorandum, Simmons comments that he did not believe Rothman's claims of controlling

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agents and material assets. He recommends that there be no further discussion with Rothman re these claims.

Simmons notes from this meeting give McConnell's address as Charlotte, N. Carolina. This memo includes additional comments made by Rothman -

- a- Claims to know Prio, Betancourt
- b- "suspects Patrick op as being funny and ill-advised."
- c- In the last year Rothman has met Arango 20-25 times.
- Rothman knows friends: "Garcia" and "Tito"
- d- Austin Young is Rothman's personal pilot.
- e- He last visited the Dominican Rep. in 1959 for the purpose of communicating with assets and contacts. "John Abbes asked Rothman do job"

The file also contains some information on Eduardo Whitehouse, Orlando Piedra, and Miranda Fernandez.

I. ~~to~~ Eduardo Julio Whitehouse Insua (DOB 3-14-14) aka "Teddy". Whitehouse is described as a compatriot of Rothman's. An April 5, 1960 report states that Whitehouse and Elliot Spinning intended to take a B-26 to Vera Cruz. Sam Rubin (believed to be identical with Sam "Stretch" Rubin, chief doorman at the Biltmore Terrace Hotel) was reported to be the owner of the B-26 (Reg # N32446). A Dec. 31, 1959 report indicates that U.S. Customs seized a B-26 at Miami and another (N28816) at Vero Beach, when Whitehouse and Spinning attempted to move them. A 12 Dec 1960 report states that Whitehouse was responsible for setting fire to the sugar crops in early 1960. States he was asked by

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Alberto Fernandez for help. Fernandez has set up a guerilla organization. A 13 Feb 1961 report states that according to Alexander I Rorke, Jr., Whitehouse has 70 pilots available and ready to take drastic action against Castro and have worked out a "definite plan of action" to accomplish "Castro's overthrow."

II. Orlando Piedra

Piedra was formerly in charge of the Dept. of Investigations under Batista. A 8 Jan 1960 report states that according to Enrique Fernandez Parajon, both he and Piedra are heading the "military section" of the counter-revolutionary group which is receiving monetary support from Batista. A 4 March 1960 report indicates Piedra met or planned to meet with General Jose Pedraza during the latter's visit to Washington. Piedra is described as a member of BRAC who fled Cuba on Jan 1, 1959.

Reference is made to a New Orleans FBI report, dated March 27, 1961. On Oct 2, 1959 there is a report that Piedra received orders by Batista thru Jose Suarez Nunez to immediately consolidate anti-Castro forces.

III Miranda Fernandez - There is one report, 3-8-61, which states Miranda admitted ~~in 1959 and 1960~~ to furnishing aid to Rolando Masferrer in 1959-1960. He stated he is now providing aid and assistance to his former military regiment who are still in Cuba working against Castro. He thinks the group is associated with FRD.

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